

I am thankful for the work of the Healey administration in my home State to insulate Massachusetts residents from this decision. The Commonwealth must not let Texas set the agenda for women's healthcare.

I also strongly support the work of organizations like Mayday Health, who are informing and empowering women to make their own decisions about their reproductive health and working to get the medication across State lines.

On the Federal level, I joined my colleagues in submitting an amicus brief to the Supreme Court urging them to protect a woman's right to choose. I will not stop fighting to ensure access to safe, effective reproductive healthcare for all Americans.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO INVESTIGATIVE SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to clause 5(a)(4)(A) of rule X, and the order of the House of January 9, 2023, of the following Members of the House to be available to serve on investigative subcommittees of the Committee on Ethics for the 118th Congress:

Mr. BENTZ, Oregon
Mr. CLINE, Virginia
Mrs. KIM, California
Ms. LEE, Florida
Mr. MANN, Kansas
Mr. OWENS, Utah
Mr. PENCE, Indiana
Mr. ROSE, Tennessee
Mr. ROUZER, North Carolina
Mr. YAKYM, Indiana

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order hour.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, for the next 60 minutes, we have a chance to speak directly to the American people on issues that are of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, the constituents we represent, and all Americans.

I rise today for the Tennessee Three, who stood in the face of bigotry and vitriol to fight for the communities they serve.

After six lives were lost due to gun violence in Nashville, the Republican-

led Tennessee Legislature expelled two Black lawmakers who stood with families, teachers, and students to demand a solution.

What happened to Representative Justin Pearson and Representative Justin Jones is an utter disgrace. This expulsion was a blow to our democracy and underscored the legislature's flagrant disrespect for their First Amendment rights.

The families of those who lost loved ones in The Covenant School shooting deserve real legislative solutions, not bigotry and petty politics.

As elected officials, it is our solemn responsibility to keep our communities safe from gun violence. Extreme Republicans have other priorities; protecting the NRA instead of our children and silencing the voices of our Black leaders.

Extremist Republicans continue to look the other way as our schools become firing ranges; as our movie theaters become firing ranges; as our places of worship become firing ranges.

It should provide us with some comfort that both of these lawmakers expelled were recently reinstated with unanimous support. Local leaders in Shelby County and Nashville were able to see through the hatred and recognize that representatives Pearson and Jones were fighting for their constituents.

However, let's not forget that what happened in the Tennessee Legislature can happen in any community anywhere in our country. Any State could be next, including my home State of Florida.

We cannot forget about why Justin Jones and Justin Pearson were expelled in the first place. They were fighting for an answer to end the gun violence epidemic that wreaks havoc in all communities in our country.

Nashville, like so many other cities, has been touched by this crisis. Families in South Florida know it all too well after a gunman entered the grounds of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and took 17 innocent lives in 2018.

Enough is enough. I urge Congress to come together in passing an assault weapons ban before more lives are lost. This senseless violence can no longer be left unaddressed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois, (Mr. JACKSON).

Mr. JACKSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to confront a multitude of challenges that have relentlessly gnawed at the very soul of our Nation, the devastating plague of gun violence, the erosion of our democratic values, and the insidious persistence of racism that continues to cast its dark shadow over our society.

As we stand today, hearts heavy with sorrow, we remember the innocent lives lost in the tragic mass shooting at The Covenant School in Nashville. Three young children and three adults were mercilessly taken from us, leaving a void in their families and communities that can never be filled.

The Metropolitan Nashville Police Department identified the victims as Evelyn Dieckhaus, 9 years of age; Hallie Scruggs, 9 years of age; William Kinney, 9 years of age; Katherine Koonce, 60; Cynthia Peak, 61; Mike Hill, 61.

In the wake of this unspeakable tragedy, the Tennessee State Legislature, a body that was meant to protect its citizens and uphold the values of this great Nation, chose to abdicate its responsibilities.

Instead of working tirelessly to keep their communities safe from the horrors of gun violence, they opted for an unprecedented and unjust course of action; expelling two Black members of the Democratic Caucus who stood with families, who stood with teachers, and who stood with the will of the students in their righteous demand for gun safety reform.

Representative Justin Jones and Representative Justin Pearson, two Black and duly elected representatives, were silenced, their voices snuffed out like candles in a storm.

The GOP-led House's actions have sent a chilling message that racism, the vile scourge that has blighted our Nation's history, is still alive and well.

My fellow colleagues, it is high time we stand up and speak truth to power. We must stand tall, shoulder to shoulder, and declare that we will no longer tolerate this blatant racism and anti-democratic behavior. We will not let the echoes of the past define our presence, nor dictate our future.

To truly understand the gravity of the situation in Tennessee, we must delve into the sordid history of State legislatures in the South and their treatment of Black lawmakers.

During the Reconstruction era, we saw the rise of Black political representation. However, this progress was met with fierce resistance from the white supremacists who sought to maintain their grip on power.

□ 1945

In Georgia, 32 Black legislators, known as the Original 33, were expelled from the general assembly in 1868. They were among the first African-American State legislators in the United States. Twenty-four of their members were ministers. Their only crime was the color of their skin.

This blatant act of racism sets a dangerous precedent for future generations.

In the turbulent times of the civil rights and antiwar movements, Mr. Julian Bond, a key figure in the founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1966. Amidst the struggle for justice and equality, the Georgia House refused to seat Mr. Julian Bond, alleging that his opposition to the Vietnam war rendered him unfit to serve.

It took a Supreme Court ruling to overturn the decision and affirm Bond's right to serve in the State legislature.

Moreover, we cannot forget that even the United States Congress has denied African-American lawmakers their rights to seats.

On February 27, 1869, Congress rejected John Willis Menard, the first Black man elected to the House of Representatives. Mr. Menard, a poet, newspaper publisher, and politician, secured a resounding victory in Louisiana's Second Congressional District.

In November 1868, despite his triumph, his election was met with fierce opposition led by the defeated White candidate, Caleb S. Hunt. Then-Congressman JAMES Garfield argued it was too soon "for a Negro" to join the Congress and that the seat should be declared vacant to save the \$5,000 salary.

As a result, Mr. Menard was never seated, and his constituents were denied representation until the next election.

It is both disheartening and infuriating that even after more than 150 years since the end of the Civil War, we continue to grapple with the same injustices that have plagued our Nation since its inception. Racism remains deeply entrenched in our society, and the expulsion of Representative Justin Jones and Representative Justin Pearson in Tennessee is a stark reminder that our struggle for equality, justice, and fair representation is far from over.

We as a nation have not made as much progress as we should have despite the countless sacrifices of our forebearers. Black people in America continue to face systemic oppression and are silenced in various forms.

The legacy of slavery, segregation, sedition, and racial violence casts a long shadow over our society. However, it is in the face of adversity that we find our strength.

Throughout history, Black Americans have persevered, united, and fought for their rights, standing tall against the forces that sought to silence them. From the brave men and women who stood up against racial segregation to the pioneering lawmakers who broke barriers in the State legislatures and Congress, their resilience and determination have paved the way for future generations.

Now, it is our turn to carry the torch of progress. We must stand to demand an end to the injustices that continue to suppress the voices of our brothers and our sisters. We must actively dismantle the structures that perpetuate racism and inequality, ensuring that every citizen, regardless of the color of their skin, has the opportunity to thrive and make their voices heard.

Let us draw inspiration from those who have come before us and forged a new path toward a brighter future. Let the bold parallels of the past guide us as we reshape the narrative, ensuring that the sacrifices of our ancestors were not made in vain. It is our responsibility as a nation to guarantee that every American, irrespective of race, has the right to be heard, respected, and valued.

We are one Nation, indivisible, bound by our shared history and our common aspirations. Let us rise together and demand change not only for ourselves but for our children and our children's children.

We must break the chains of injustice, end the cycle of discrimination, and ensure that our voices, the voices of Black Americans and all marginalized people, will never again be silenced.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE).

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK) for yielding, and I thank Mr. JACKSON for co-anchoring this evening's Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on this day praying for the speedy recovery of 16-year-old Ralph Yarl of Kansas City, Missouri, who was released from the hospital today after being shot in the head for ringing the wrong doorbell.

We live in a society today where more and more communities are living in a recurring nightmare, reeling from gun violence.

Gun violence is the number one killer of children in the United States of America. While it has always been Black communities that have borne the brunt and have been the most victimized and terrorized by gun violence, and have too often assumed the blame of a poorly regulated gun industry, I truly expected that there would have been some bipartisan action taken to protect the next generation after the tragedy at Sandy Hook all those years ago.

Instead, the far right stays licking the boot of the NRA, taking their blood money and looking the other way. It has become crystal clear that the rightwing Republicans couldn't care less.

It is unconscionable that they care so little for the lives of children. I mean, look at what has happened just this past week in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama.

Mass murder and mass casualties have become commonplace, but we can't make them normalized.

It is not lost upon me that two Black lawmakers, Representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson, were expelled from the Tennessee House after joining peaceful protests against gun violence. Another generation that has had to grow up doing gun violence drills in their schools has now taken leadership and is leading the charge.

Let's be clear. The CBC won't stand by and allow another Jim Crow era to take root while further GOP legislators abuse their power, as we saw in Tennessee. The CBC will continue to push back against any and all efforts by Republicans to subvert the will of the American people, whether it is the effort to overturn our election on January 6 or efforts to silence or expel members from statehouses who advo-

cate for a better nation, a better America, safe from the horrors of gun violence.

Again, I thank the gentlewoman from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for yielding.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida and the gentleman from Illinois for leading this Special Order hour, which is a great responsibility given to them by the chairman of this body.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the recent expulsion of two elected members of the Tennessee Legislature and the threat this action poses for American democracy.

On April 6, two Black elected officials, Justin Jones and Justin Pearson, as we all know, were expelled from the Tennessee State Legislature. They were involved in peaceful protests to demand legislators pass stricter gun laws in the State.

Why they were engaged in that peaceful protest is because their colleagues had tried to silence them so many times during normal debate, in committee, and on the floor of the Tennessee Legislature that they finally had to take these actions in order to be heard. They were expelled because of that protest.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of those young men. They stood up for what they felt was right, and they took their opportunity, as elected officials of that body, to be heard. If it took rebellion to be heard, a megaphone to be heard on the floor, then that is what they had to do.

I was honored to be part of something similar that the Congressional Black Caucus led on this floor not too many years ago. I see my colleague JOYCE BEATTY and my colleague YVETTE CLARKE here. They were both part of that rebellion. We sat down on the House floor, which is against the rules.

We sat down because of the same issue these young men spoke up for: gun violence. We were tired. John Lewis led us, as he had done so many times before, and we sat right down on that floor and held the House of Representatives for over 24 hours.

Our colleagues tried to come back and disrupt us and scare us, but we were unbowed. We continued to hold this floor until we had people understand that we were serious about this.

Our children are being killed all over this Nation, and the unfortunate thing that happens with so many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle is that, until it happens in their community, until it happens to their friends, until it happens to their family, they don't want to talk about it. Let it happen in their community and to their friends and to their family, and then we have to do something.

It is just like the fentanyl problem, a major problem in this country now.

Urban communities screamed about the opioid issue for 20 years, and nobody did anything. Now that it is impacting their families, it is a major health issue.

We have to understand that all issues in this country should be looked at in that manner. These young men were brave and articulate. It made sense for them to protest the horrible and unnecessary gun violence that occurs every day in this country.

In March, a former student entered the Covenant School in Nashville and killed three students and three adults. The school was part of Nashville's Covenant Presbyterian Church. Like millions of Americans, Tennessee residents are sick and tired of gun violence.

I have many Members behind me, so I will not belabor the point, but, Mr. Speaker, when are we going to address this issue?

The majority of the people in this country say they are willing to have reasonable gun background checks to make sure criminals or people with mental illness do not have these weapons because we are finding many times those are the people that are having these issues.

Why can't we deal with that? It is not unreasonable. Every American has a Second Amendment right to own a gun, but we should make sure we keep guns out of certain people's hands. That is what we need to do.

□ 2000

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY), from the Third District.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, let me say thank you to my colleagues and my friends for chairing tonight's Special Order hour. To the gentlewoman from Florida and the gentleman from Illinois, I thank them for speaking truth to power. I thank them for reminding us of our history. I thank them for reminding us why we are here tonight as we speak to the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to stand in solidarity with the members of the Congressional Black Caucus and with the Tennessee Three. I have this raised fist on a poster behind me saying: I stand with the #TennesseeThree.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak truth to power tonight in the face of an unspeakable tragedy, in which six Americans—three educators, and three babies 9 years old—were murdered senselessly due to gun violence, the move by the Tennessee legislature to expel these lawmakers for using their voice to speak truth to power is unjust, undemocratic, and un-American.

You will hear those words riddled through our Chamber throughout the night. To silence lawmakers for standing up for the will of the people is not democracy. I am glad that my classmate, my colleague, and my friend, Congressman DONALD PAYNE reminded us of April, 7 years ago in this very

Chamber, where in a full House we had a sit-in and stopped the Congress in an effort to get laws passed on gun violence, gun reform, because of the number of times we come to this Chamber, we come to the floor's microphone, and we say: 1 minute of silence. We did it today, Mr. Speaker.

Democrats and Republicans can come and stand in this Chamber and in a solemn hollow voice beg us to pray for the victims of another mass shooting, beg us to stand together for 1 minute, 60 seconds in it, because lives have been lost to gun violence with assault weapons.

Mr. Speaker, I respect the Second Amendment, but I don't respect coming to this floor—and I don't respect the individuals that will not bring gun reform to this floor in legislation that will help us eradicate what we are living through. It is just not fair.

If I had my way, I would put a piece of legislation on the House floor that says we can't come to the floor and do a 1-minute when we are losing lives because we can put something in place to make a difference.

The expulsion of the State representatives, Justin Jones and Justin Pearson, two Black, duly-elected members representing minority districts, makes it clear that racism is still alive and well in this Nation.

What happened in Tennessee's legislature was a blow to our democracy. If this can happen in Nashville, it can happen in any community in this country we call America. Republicans in Tennessee's legislature shut down the members for standing up for our children.

Mr. Speaker, gun violence is a leading cause of death. Mr. Speaker, gun violence is an epidemic in our country. Inaction, Mr. Speaker, should not be an option. We need more leaders and officials standing on the front lines with the American people to assure them that we are fighting to ban assault weapons, fighting to protect our children, fighting to protect our communities, and yes, fighting to protect our democracy. That is exactly what the Tennessee Three did.

Two Black men—young men—and a White woman stood together for justice. They fought to defend our democracy and the power of our voices. And, yes, as you have heard and I imagine will hear repeated again, just yesterday another tragedy occurred in this Nation, taking the lives of four Alabama young people, 16 years old, going to a birthday party.

I imagine this week we will come to this floor again, Democrats and Republicans, and acknowledge that this should not have happened, and acknowledge that, again, we should bow our heads for 1 minute, 60 seconds.

As a grandmother, as someone who has grandchildren who I hope can live to look to the future, I would hope that we would stand here and say for our children, if not for us as Republicans and Democrats, that we can stand to-

gether and come up with some type of legislation for gun reform.

Let me end here by saying, yes, we should put gun violence at the forefront of our agenda.

Mr. Speaker, it is simple, we should put people over politics because not bringing gun reform to this floor is simply a political maneuver. Let me say, we stand here together as members of the powerful Congressional Black Caucus, and we remind you that you cannot expel justice and you cannot expel our voices.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, can I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 33 minutes remaining.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), from the 18th District.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted but sad but empowered but anguished but yet fulfilled but yet rising but yet encouraged but yet ready to fight this evening. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for her distinguished leadership and friendship.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted as well with the gentleman from Illinois for his shining leadership and transformational changes that are happening in and around his district in Chicago.

I am honored to be here with my other colleagues that are here. I thank Chairman HORSFORD and Chairwoman BEATTY, emeritus of the Congressional Black Caucus, and I am honored to again call the Congressional Black Caucus the conscience of the Congress, and, yes, the conscience of the Nation. We can say that because in our midst we have had the Honorable John Lewis.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go down memory lane just a bit. As I do so and before I speak to the irony of the connection of the Tennessee Three to the historical record. Does anyone remember the Georgia 33, as we have brought to highlight? There were 33 Black legislators right after the Civil War, 1866 to 1868, proud and standing tall because they had some way of gaining the right to vote and the people there—the freed slaves, after the 13th Amendment was eliminated ending slavery in the United States—our freed slaves could vote. Property owners, as I believe.

They elected 33 Black legislators, and they were proud. You could see them with their button-down suits, speaking the best English they could, and fighting for their constituents. That is what we are to do here. Listening to the people and having the ear of their constituents.

Yet, within a few moments of their great victory, election to the Georgia Assembly they were expelled, thrown out because of the color of their skin, which began the demise of reconstruction and the Black codes and the horrors of the rage of the Klan and others leading into the 1900s.

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of George White who stood on the floor in

1901, who had been drawn out of this Congress, a Member of Congress, and said: The Negro will rise like the phoenix.

Then in 1966—I am still stunned—a brilliant young man by the name of Julian Bond was duly-elected by the constituents, he had their ear, and they had his ear. A young man. He had all the willingness to do what was right as an elected member of the Georgia Assembly, and he was expelled for his supporting the fact of the SNCC, the organization that he previously led, indicating that the Vietnam war violated international law.

He didn't speak of the soldiers, which I have repeatedly said that our soldiers put on uniforms unselfishly. We never accuse them. They fight and they die. They died in Vietnam from all of our communities from the South to the North to the East to West, from our backyards. But because he expressed a democratic belief, meaning his right to a belief that might have been different, and because of democracy he had the right to speak, he was expelled.

Now we come to the fear and the absolute outrage of lack of understanding. I am baffled by the expulsion of the Tennessee Three: Representative Pearson, Representative Jones, and Representative Johnson.

All they did was come to hear the cries of America's best, the youth, the children, crying out again: How much more bloodshed can we take? The Congressional Black Caucus has been a leading force joining with our colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this tonight—we come from the same State—let me just say this. We all tend to oratory, we are passionate and emotional. After all these years and all the deaths of children, can we find even a sense of Congress that will lead us to be able to condemn gun violence as being the number one killer of our children through homicide?

The very fact that four children died and other innocent persons in Nashville just a mere couple of weeks ago, I want you to know that I feel personal pain when the news rises up in the early morning hours of what happened the night before, or the weekend, I have a personal pain.

My tenure here was a tenure during the assault weapons ban, but in the midst there was Columbine. The numbers showed that they went down, the assault weapon incidences. Now I am living with Sandy Hook. I am living with Parkland, Virginia Tech. I am living with Texas Tech. I am living with any number of those in Texas from the Walmart to the church to Uvalde where I went and talked with the families and went to funerals and cried and wondered why children were dead—19 of them.

These young men in Tennessee were walking the pathway of the Georgia 33 and Julian Bond. As history reflects, they did nothing wrong. These three individuals, one who was not expelled,

did nothing wrong as well. They were representing their constituents. They were nonviolent. They were in the midst of civil disobedience. They could not be heard. They were on the floor where one could do a lot of things.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article titled "The 'All Things Being Equal Test' Part II: Blatant Racism in the Tennessee House."

[From Forbes, Apr 7, 2023]

THE 'ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL TEST' PART II:
BLATANT RACISM IN THE TENNESSEE HOUSE

(By Susan Harmeling)

The shocking but not surprising expulsion of two young Black men by the Tennessee State Legislature while their 60-year-old White colleague was spared ouster despite breaking house rules in the exact same way is a blatant display of racism, pure and simple. It may sound ridiculously obvious, but it needs saying. Representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson were clearly kicked out because they are Black, and also supposedly not "apologetic" enough for their White, male counterparts who decided to pursue the nuclear option and remove them from office instead of using other, lesser punishments such as censure. Representative Gloria Johnson, who a few days earlier had joined Jones and Pearson in taking to the house floor to demand an assault weapons ban following the slaughter of three little kids in their school, was protected by her whiteness, as she herself publicly stated.

This is an important moment in our society as it exposes both an ugly truth and an opportunity for progress. The ugly truth is obvious: two young, Black men in Tennessee—the birthplace of the Ku Klux Klan—were expelled for breaking rules of "decorum" while their White colleague who, again, joined them every step of the way still has her job. As Rep. Jones pointed out, there have been only two other expulsions from the Tennessee House in the last 157 years. In 1980, a representative was found guilty of accepting a bribe while in office and in 2016, another was expelled over allegations of sexual harassment. Recently, neither an arrest on charges of domestic violence nor admitted child molestation nor alleged urination on the seat of a fellow legislator was enough to warrant these offenders expulsion, but loudly protesting inaction on gun violence after three 9-year-olds are executed—and especially protesting such horror while Black—was reason enough for a Republican supermajority to take this extreme action. In a particularly repulsive and condescending comment, Rep. Andrew Farmer, R-Sevierville, blamed Pearson for throwing a "temper tantrum with an adolescent bull-horn". He continued addressing Pearson, "That yearning for attention, that's what you wanted? Well, you're getting it now." Farmer may as well have preceded his ugly rant with the word "boy" for good measure.

But take heart! Farmer is right in one sense—these young men are clearly going to get attention, just not the kind of attention Farmer was hoping for. This is clearly not the last we have heard from Jones and Pearson, both of whom are extraordinarily talented young legislators and orators. In fact, the Tennessee Republicans picked the wrong targets if they are hoping for this issue to go away. I personally have hope that their strong and powerful voices, particularly on the epidemic of gun violence, will not be silenced by this temporary, unjustified setback.

I would like to focus on the opportunity—and more specifically the lesson—that this sorry episode presents. Too often, white peo-

ple (or any people whose own "tribe" acts in such a blatantly racist way) look for alternative explanations for such behavior. But if it walks like racism and quacks like racism, it is racism. Due to our tendency toward homophily, our knee-jerk reaction is to start explaining away the bad behavior of people who look like we do. But we have to stop it. And the best way to stop it is to put the episode through the "all-things-being-equal" test (otherwise know as the "but for" test), as in, would these young men have been expelled "but for" their race? Well, in this case, our answer was served up on a silver platter because Rep. Johnson was spared while her two colleagues lost their seats.

Typically, it's a bit more subtle. Would I have been called "confident" in teaching evaluations but for my gender? The answer is no, because not one single one of my male counterparts ever saw that adjective on their evaluations. Their confidence was simply assumed. Would Joe Biden have called Barack Obama "clean and articulate" but for Obama's race? No, because in the next breath he called him the first "mainstream African American". Would a young woman I recently interviewed have been asked by an older male colleague what she was making her boyfriend for dinner had the gender roles been reversed? Again, very doubtful (she swears she doesn't cook and never told this man that she does). Would George Floyd still be here today but for his race? Would a young, Black female former student of mine have been told by her White male boss that she could get promoted more quickly if she just "told a few more jokes" "but for" her race and gender? You get the idea. . .

Assumptions, stereotypes, and the natural human desire to hang around with our "Amen Choir" only serve to further divide us and to keep certain members of society from reaching their full potential. I suspect that those conservative, White, male Tennessee legislators would be a lot more comfortable with Reps. Jones and Pearson if they tried harder to conform to their ways of dress, behavior, speech and "decorum". In fact, Representative Pearson's previous decision to wear a traditional, African dashiki on the house floor really got some of those guys riled up.

But the promise of America is that it is a melting pot where we are called by our better angels to treat all fellow citizens with respect and tolerance. And the punishment for rule-breaking (or law-breaking) should be proportionate to the transgression, and the same for everyone. The quest for fairness in all areas of society, from law to politics to business to our many daily personal interactions, would benefit from the regular application of the all-things-being-equal test—"but for" the individual's race, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc, would things have played out in the same way? In Tennessee, if you're a young, Black male in the statehouse, the answer is clearly no.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I come today to be able to join my colleagues and to again ask for the question of justice and democracy and freedom, and to be able to salute these three. To say that in their name, from Tennessee, now from Alabama where teenagers were murdered, can we not do our work on the floor of the House: from abandoning assault weapons, from passing a sensible storage bill, the Emily Vaughan storage bill, to getting rid of ghost guns, to making red flag laws permanent and not voluntary—because of what happened in Louisville, mental health concerns, and a number of other places. Can we not do this?

□ 2015

I simply close with respect to the late Representative John Lewis. I simply close and pay tribute to him, for it was before your tenure, Mr. Speaker, that we did take to the floor of the House to sit with his leadership in the pain of another shooting of children way back during Parkland. We couldn't take it anymore. I wonder if this is not the moment when we can find common ground. I am going to look for my friends on both sides of the aisle to see whether we can find common ground on some form of gun safety legislation. Then I will say to those Tennessee Three what John Lewis said: Never give in, never give out, and never give up.

I pay tribute to them and all others who have never given up, never given out, and never given in.

God bless all of you, and God bless the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, last week, we witnessed acts reminiscent of the extraordinary punitive action against lawmakers that can be traced back in Tennessee's deeply rooted racist history.

In fact, the third time since the Civil War era that the Tennessee House has expelled a lawmaker from its ranks and threatens to further inflame the partisan rancor within a bitterly divided state.

The silencing of the voices of two Black members for peacefully protesting gun violence is not only racist and anti-democratic, but also morally bankrupt, and out of step with the overwhelming majority of Americans who believe that we need common sense gun control reforms to save lives.

The expulsions of Tennessee State Representative Justin Jones and Representative Justin Pearson—two Black duly elected members representing minority districts—makes clear that racism is alive and well in Tennessee, and in America.

If we want to progressively advance as a democracy, we must recognize and acknowledge these ugly truths and work towards eradicating racism when and where it rears its ugly head.

These expulsions showcase is a harsh and racist retaliation against Representatives Jones and Pearson because they rightfully supported peaceful student protestors and demanded that the Republican majority in the legislature do more to protect communities against gun violence in the aftermath of the Covenant School shooting.

I ask, why have we come this far to achieve progress for our democracy to go backwards?

What occurred in the Tennessee Legislature and to our fellow lawmakers was a blow to our democracy.

We must be cognizant of that.

This should concern every American because the hallmark of a vibrant and healthy democracy is the very thing the Republicans in the Tennessee Legislature shut down: Freedom of Speech.

It is hard to ignore the racial dynamic that played out. Its clear race is involved when two Black members were expelled and not the white member for the same alleged offense.

Tennessee Speaker Sexton comparing children, parents, teachers and their representatives—who only want children to be safe from gun violence in the classroom—to insurrec-

tionists shows how morally-bankrupt Republicans are in our country.

There is absolutely no comparison between that peaceful protest, and the violence in the U.S. Capitol on January 6th.

I stand today to acknowledge, support, and engage as much as possible to make sure reinstatement is upheld, equal democracy is demonstrated across all levels of government no matter the party affiliation, and we move forward as a democracy.

We must be weary, however, that this extraordinary abuse of power in Tennessee is an ominous sign of what is currently taking place and what may still lie ahead in other state legislatures.

These anti-democracy efforts are spreading in red states around the country, including: the Texas State TEA's move to take control of Houston schools, removing the elected school board and superintendent; and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis's abuse of power in removing a prosecutor for political reasons.

In Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis abused his power by removing an elected prosecutor because he didn't like his policy positions. A federal judge said DeSantis acted unconstitutionally, but the judge said he did not have the power to reinstate the prosecutor. DeSantis is now considering removing a second prosecutor.

And in my home state of Texas, the state Government Education Agency will soon take oversight of the Houston school system away from the elected school board and superintendent. The takeover, an ACLU Texas attorney explains, "is not about public education but about political control of an almost entirely Black and brown student body in one of the country's most diverse cities."

Like our ancestors and civil rights legends, we must stand up and push back against these growing, dangerous attacks on our freedoms and democracy.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the Seventh District of Georgia (Mrs. McBATH).

Mrs. McBATH. First, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honorable SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK and also JONATHAN JACKSON on behalf of the CBC for standing on the front lines tonight for this very special hour.

I rise this evening to address the frightening assault on democracy which took place in the Tennessee legislature. In the days following the tragic shooting at The Covenant School, Representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson demanded action to keep their communities safe from gun violence.

In the spirit of our dear departed friend and as we have talked about John Lewis a great deal tonight, these lawmakers were doing nothing more than making good trouble. In response, the Republican Party majority in Tennessee took measures to expel Representatives Jones and Pearson from their positions undermining the will of the voters who sent them to Nashville.

This is simply unconscionable. This is not how it works. This is not how democracy works. This is an attack on the very principle of representative democracy on which our Nation was founded.

Our children are being murdered in their classrooms, and rather than work on solutions to prevent these senseless tragedies from happening again and again and again, Republican leaders in Tennessee opted to expel the lawmakers who are simply fighting for change, fighting to save lives, and fighting to save the lives of everyone in this country.

Our children are being murdered in their classrooms. We watch it day in and day out. We watch it at birthday parties, on our front doorsteps, and in their friends' cars as my son, Jordan, was murdered.

We cannot look away from the tragedies that are devastating families all across the country. Shame on us. Shame on this body to turn a blind eye to the massacre of human life.

Who have we become in this body that we have no thought for preservation of human life?

We cannot seek to silence the voices that are crying out for change because we are not powerless. We have the power. We are the body. We have solutions to put an end to gun violence that claims over 100 Americans in this country every single day; solutions that the majority of Americans support and are crying out for.

What happened in Nashville sets a very disturbing precedent. Efforts to silence duly elected representatives can happen in States all across this country. It happened right here in this very Chamber. But the will of the American people will not be overturned. The efforts of those who would rather betray trust in our democratic institutions than fight to keep kids safe in our school, those efforts will fail, and we will continue our efforts to make good on the promise that we must fulfill for America's children. A better and safer America is what they deserve. It is truly possible if we have the will and the courage to do it.

Representatives Jones and Pearson are disrupters. And, yes, for cultural change to make this community—our community—safer, it means disruption. That is how change happens.

As we talked about earlier, mentioning the sit-in with Representative John Lewis on the floor, when that happened, I was leading a rally outside the Capitol, disrupting, to make sure that people's voices were heard and to make sure that survivors and victims like me have the ability to express and ask this body to do what is right.

The time has passed. It is long overdue. Over and over and over and over again, we come before this House and this body and ask people to stand up with courage and do the right thing.

When will it happen?

Do we have the courage to act?

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the Second District of Louisiana (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleagues, Congresswoman CHERFILUS-

MCCORMICK from Florida and Representative JACKSON from Illinois, for their leadership, their commitment, and for allowing us to have this opportunity to speak on such an important, important measure.

I was outraged by what we all witnessed in Tennessee at the beginning of April. Following the tragic mass shooting at The Covenant School, the Republican majority in the State legislature chose to avoid passing any meaningful gun reform or even having any meaningful discussion about gun reform. Instead, they sought to thwart democracy and to silence the critics who stood with the community and who demanded action. Prayers are wonderful. I subscribe to them daily. Well-wishing is a wonderful thing, and it make us feel good. That alone without action is not enough.

We as elected officials are sworn to a task and to a duty to serve and to provide. In Tennessee that day, we failed the people of Tennessee. We failed the people of America. Instead of action, they expelled two Black American members of the Democratic Caucus who stood with parents, teachers, and students to demand action and to speak truth to power about the reality of gun violence.

This was an attack on our democracy, and all of us, Republican, Democrat, and other, should be outraged with such an attack on democracy because this issue today may have been an issue that the majority ruling party didn't like.

What happens tomorrow when we unilaterally seek to silence the voices of duly elected people in a democratic society?

Stop and think about that for a second. Stop and think about it. Stop and think about the threat to our democracy. The cornerstone and the pillar of our society is freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and the ability to disagree and to have meaningful discourse. That is what we all ran on. That is what the mighty Constitution protects.

Yet, in Tennessee that was ignored. It was ignored. It was defiled. Everyone, of every race and party, should find disdain and pain with that kind of treatment in the democratic process.

In the post-Civil War Reconstruction era, four Members of the House, James Lewis, John Willis Menard, P.B.S. Pinchback, and Josiah Thomas Walls, were wrongly denied the right to take their seats.

These egregious actions in Tennessee show us that the fight for Black representation in the United States is still an ongoing battle.

Our democracy is built on the freedom of speech and the freedom to protest. To expel elected representatives for standing with their neighbors after an horrific act of gun violence against children is appalling. I am enraged that it was two Black lawmakers who were expelled.

Black people in the United States have historically been vilified for

speaking up. We have been beaten. We have been attacked by dogs. We have been hosed with powerful water hoses. We have been hanged from trees. Yet, in 2023, two duly elected members of a State legislature were unilaterally dismissed and removed from service for standing up with the people. There were no guns. There were no spears. There were no choke holds. There was no fighting. There was no profanity. There were no broken windows or broken arms. It was mere words—mere words—that defended the Constitution of our land and that defended the people to protest against something as egregious as the death of children. And we say we don't need to do anything with gun control?

You can't find one thing, Mr. Speaker?

Can we find any one thing that we can come together on that would suggest that we hear the pain? We hear the cries? We see the eyes of Black and White mothers and fathers who will never see their children again?

Yet, we continue to find a comfortable place in the shade and hide behind rhetoric.

The time has come for us to do something, to act, to move, and to show the American people that we will not continue to sit back and watch senseless killings on our streets. Look at the statistics. We have more mass murders in a year than we have days in this year.

Doesn't that mean anything?

Doesn't that cause you to cringe and say no more?

Black, White, Republican, and Democratic, there are lots of things that we can agree to disagree on. Public safety should not be one of them, particularly when it comes to standing up for our young people.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we send a promise of action, and we ask you to join us in delivering on that promise of action.

Today I stand for justice. Today I stand with the Justins. Today I stand with the Tennessee Three. Today and every day I invite you, Mr. Speaker, to join me and others in supporting the bare principle of democracy and protecting its people.

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Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 10 minutes remaining.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FROST).

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I am here today because I, like the rest of our Nation, am outraged about what we have seen happen in Tennessee.

Six innocent people died as a result of senseless gun violence in Nashville, a school shooting where we lost children that will never be forgotten.

Instead of banning together to honor these victims, to honor those families, to honor with action, real action that

would save lives, Republicans in the Tennessee Legislature took the racist step of expelling two Black lawmakers who stood with the families, students, teachers, and their constituents in demanding change.

The only thing that Representatives Jones and Pearson are guilty of is doing the right thing, of standing with their constituents who sent them to the State legislature to fight for their lives. That is why they have already been unanimously reappointed to their positions by the people in their local governments.

I pray and act and fight for a day when we are more outraged that children were murdered in a pool of their own blood at school than we are that Black folks have the audacity to take up space in the halls of power.

Guess what? Representatives Jones and Pearson will continue to take up that space. Black lawmakers such as myself and my colleagues in this room will continue to take up that space. The people—children—for whom the leading cause of death in this country is guns will continue to take up that space.

As long as there is injustice, we will not be silent. We will continue to fight for a world where no one has to have the fear of gun violence.

I commend Representatives Jones and Pearson. They are American heroes because they fight for a day when we can be safe.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE).

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida and the gentleman from Illinois for managing this very important Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the blatantly antidemocratic and, frankly, racist expulsion of Tennessee Representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson.

In response to the Covenant School shooting that claimed the lives of three innocent children and three staff members, Representatives Jones, Pearson, and Johnson protested on the floor of the Tennessee House. They were calling for long-overdue commonsense gun reform that would help save the lives of children and keep our communities from becoming war zones.

They engaged in good trouble, similar to what Congressman John Lewis did when he sat on this very floor to demand action to end gun violence.

What the "Tennessee Three" did was righteous, yet instead of joining the calls to keep our communities safe, extremist Republicans retaliated by expelling Representatives Jones and Pearson, two young Black male lawmakers.

Actions of civil disobedience by Black men and women have been the impetus of change in our Nation, from boycotts to peaceful protests to sit-ins. I know we like to romanticize the civil rights movement, but let's be clear: It

was not long ago that dogs were sicced on young people for wanting the right to vote, and their disobedience was in nonviolently persisting.

Representatives Jones and Pearson's only "disobedience" was in being vocal and unapologetic about gun violence in this Nation and about being Black.

Unfortunately, throughout our history, Black people fighting for a stronger democracy and a more perfect Union have been silenced and shut down by white supremacy. When asked to make a choice between democracy and white supremacy, those in the Tennessee Legislature chose white supremacy, ignorantly presuming that this could happen without any attention, but they were wrong.

There is a long history of attacks against Black legislators going back to the Reconstruction era or even the case against civil rights advocate Julian Bond and Congressman Adam Clayton Powell.

Tennessee Republicans managed to expel two duly elected Black legislators, but the vote against Representative JOHNSON, a White woman, failed.

We cannot ignore the racial undertones of this incident and the efforts to temporarily disenfranchise Black voters and muzzle Black voices. Was it the color of these young men's skin, their age, their hair?

As a Black legislator, I know what it feels like to have to explain my very presence in these spaces. Sadly, my story is not unique. It is the story of individuals in Black and Brown communities everywhere.

That is why I introduced a resolution to immediately condemn the actions of the Tennessee Legislature and to recognize this as an attack on the very heart of our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for joining the resolution with me. He is a true advocate for the people of Tennessee.

In addition, I am proud to work with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus who reached out to Representatives Jones and Pearson and assured them that they have our support.

My colleagues stand by me today as we demand more from a country founded on the principles of liberty and justice for all because it is clear that we live in a nation where liberty and justice are only granted for some.

I am glad that both Representatives Jones and Pearson have been reinstated as interim representatives so that they can continue to serve their constituents. Their municipal governments saw the importance of getting them back to work. They have it right. The Tennessee House had it wrong. The fact that it took national outrage and the shaming of the legislature of Tennessee is absurd.

I will continue to work with my CBC colleagues to call out attacks on our democracy in Black communities across the country as we work to advance racial equity and address the needs of Black Americans because

these young men were fighting to end gun violence.

As you have heard, guns are the leading cause of death for children and teens, and Black men are 10 times more likely to be killed by gun violence. They were speaking truth to reality, and they were silenced.

I don't know why the truth is so scary, but that is why I am so proud to be part of the CBC, to make sure that we are reminding people of the truth every single day.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 2 minutes remaining.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. McCLELLAN).

Mrs. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman HORSFORD and Representatives Cherfilus-McCormick and Jackson for convening this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with my CBC colleagues in support of the "Tennessee Three" and in staunch opposition to the dangerous precedent set by Tennessee Republicans.

Just 10 days after three children and three adults were brutally and tragically murdered, rather than working to prevent that tragedy from happening again, Tennessee Republicans expelled Representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson in a gross abuse of power, a blatant infringement of free speech, and a disenfranchisement of the voters of the 52nd and 86th Tennessee House districts.

Attempts to compare the actions of the "Tennessee Three" to those of the January 6 insurrectionists to justify the expulsion trivializes the tragic events that occurred in this very building. Nobody died in the Tennessee House. A bullhorn is not a pipe bomb. Nobody called for members of the Tennessee Legislature to be hung.

Instead, Tennessee Republicans have set a dangerous precedent that threatens the very foundational principles of American democracy by attempting to silence calls for gun reform. This is something that should concern every voter. A controlling party cannot invalidate the will of the people simply because they don't agree with the position of their colleagues or the peaceful exercise of their free speech.

I stand with my CBC colleagues in denouncing this overreach. We will not stand idly by for such threats on democracy.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD), our chairman.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank our co-anchors and all the Members who spoke.

I send one very clear message: The actions of the Tennessee Legislature led by the GOP were a direct assault on our democracy and on people's duly

elected Representatives. It smacks of overt racism that they would expel two of the youngest Black men in their body for simply speaking on behalf of their constituents.

This is still an ongoing threat that we should be concerned about because what happened in the Tennessee Legislature was a blow to our democracy, and if it can happen in Nashville, it can happen in communities all over our country.

This should concern every American, including my Republican colleagues, because the hallmark of a vibrant and healthy democracy is the very thing that the Republicans in the Tennessee Legislature shut down: freedom of speech.

The Congressional Black Caucus won't stand by and allow another Jim Crow era to take root while GOP legislatures abuse their power, as we saw in Tennessee.

We stand with the "Tennessee Three." We stand with the parents calling for gun violence to end in their communities. We stand for free speech. We stand for our democracy.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in the wake of our country's 129th mass shooting, Tennessee Legislators had the opportunity to set an example of what it means to respond and act on the needs of your constituents. After an attack that killed six people—including three 9-year-old children, Tennessee Representatives had the chance to do something, anything, to keep Tennesseans safe from gun violence.

On April 6, 2023 the Tennessee Legislature set an example, but it sure wasn't the right one. Instead of actually working to keep children safe from gun violence, Republicans in the Tennessee Legislature chose to expel two Black lawmakers who chose to stand alongside families, students and teachers for gun safety reforms.

The expulsions of Representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson were both unwarranted and undemocratic. Representatives Jones and Pearson were simply supporting student protestors and demanded that the Republican majority in the Legislature do more to protect communities from gun violence following the Covenant School Shooting.

Now Representatives Jones and Pearson weren't the only legislators who joined the protestors, but they were the only two expelled which makes it clear that racism is at the root of these anti-democratic expulsions. It was an attempt to both silence Black leaders and undermine Black voters who sent Representatives Jones and Pearson to the State Capitol in the first place.

Let's be clear: this is not an isolated incident. State legislatures in the South have a history of silencing Black lawmakers and unfortunately my home State is one of the main offenders. In 1966, the Georgia General Assembly voted to refuse to seat a newly elected Julian Bond after he used his constitutional right to free speech in protest of the United States' war in Vietnam. Mr. Bond was ultimately seated in the legislature and went on to serve for 20 years in the Georgia General Assembly.

In 2017, I was elected to the same seat Julian Bond held in the Georgia State Senate. Nearly one year after being duly elected to serve, I was arrested inside the Georgia State Capitol while doing my job and standing with my constituents demanding that every vote be counted in November 2018.

As I watched the events unfold in Tennessee, the parallels struck me and reminded me that free speech in this country doesn't always apply to Black voices like mine.

Free speech is at the foundation of any healthy democracy and it is the very thing Republicans in Tennessee chose to shut down when they expelled Representatives Jones and Pearson. This should sound an alarm for every American because as history teaches us, actions that go unchecked only repeat themselves—again, and again, and again.

Though Representatives Jones and Pearson were rightfully reappointed to their seats, we cannot ignore the fact that what happened in Tennessee was yet another blow in the continued assault on democracy. And on top of it, the expulsions were completely out of step with the voices of the people—an overwhelming majority of Americans agree that common-sense gun safety laws are necessary to save lives.

We have a moral responsibility to reject any and all actions that threaten our democracy, particularly those targeted toward Black people and communities who have systemically been silenced for far too long.

Tonight, I stand with my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues to say 'no more.' That's why I've co-sponsored Representative SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE's resolution condemning the expulsions of Representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson from the Tennessee Legislature, and I encourage all of my colleagues who claim to stand on the side of democracy to do the same.

CHINESE INVOLVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to stand before you and lead this Special Order tonight.

I have a message. That message is our Nation's higher education system is being purchased and manipulated by the Chinese Communist Party.

America needs a wake-up call. I thought that wake-up call would come in the form of a Chinese spy balloon. If it was the Chinese spy balloon sent to wake us up, it seems that America has hit the snooze button.

A few weeks ago, several members of the Education and the Workforce Committee were briefed on the scheme, the

manipulation of the Chinese Communist Party on higher education in the USA, and we were all shocked. It was a shocking report, and we wanted to share the truth of how China is infiltrating and taking control over higher education in the United States.

Since 2013, \$12 billion has poured into our higher education system from foreign sources. China is by far the largest of foreign donations since that time.

Between 2013 and 2020, U.S. universities accepted nearly a billion dollars from Chinese donations. The tuition paid by Chinese students is estimated to be over \$12 billion per year. It is time we look at this influence and take it seriously.

It started over 20 years ago, Mr. Speaker, that China has been playing this game of infiltration, manipulation, and trying to purchase influence. It started with this game they play that they call the Confucius Institutes. These centers teach Chinese languages and culture but avoid discussing China's widespread human rights abuses and present Taiwan as undisputed Chinese territory.

They are simply a propaganda machine funded and directed by the Chinese Government, and we haven't even gotten started on what they are stealing from us, Mr. Speaker.

Tonight, members of the Education and the Workforce Committee and other invited Members are going to tell the story of just how far China has been infiltrating our university system. You are going to hear how top colleges and universities have not fully reported donations from foreign sources, including that of the Chinese Government.

You are going to hear the administration is not enforcing existing laws requiring full reporting of these foreign sources.

Universities, in their desire to seek donations from the public, sometimes unexpectedly or overtly take money from foreign sources and, in this case, many times from the Chinese Government.

You are going to hear also how the United States is losing the technology edge that we have long enjoyed for many years in computing, science, and engineering, all kinds of energy sources where we were the dominant player, but now because of theft and China's influence in our university system, those edges in technology are now leaning China's way. You are going to hear about that.

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So, Mr. Speaker, as we begin tonight, I just want to say that it is long overdue that we hear the truth and we are fully aware how bad China is.

I would first yield a few minutes to the chair of Education and the Workforce Committee, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman BEAN for his leadership on the Education and the Workforce Com-

mittee and also his leadership in leading this Special Order tonight.

It is a very important issue to the people of the United States, and I am very proud of him for taking the leadership and putting this Special Order together.

Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in a new era of warfare with our foreign adversaries who are vying for influence and control not only over America but especially over America's postsecondary education system.

Losing on this 21st century battleground has serious consequences for free thought, economic competitiveness, and national security.

Foreign adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party have used power and monetary influence to infiltrate colleges and universities to grow their sphere of influence in American society.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake: When we talk about China and its exertion of force and its exertion of power, we are not talking about the Chinese people. We are talking about the Chinese Communist Party, the CCP.

So let us be clear on that tonight so that nobody mistakes who we see as the enemy. It is the Chinese Communist Party.

At face value, foreign contributions coming into universities might seem harmless, but the reality is foreign money often comes with strings attached. We know with the CCP, there are always strings attached.

Every dollar that institutions accept from undisclosed foreign entities that do not share our Nation's values sends them deeper into a dangerous entanglement that undermines our Republic.

For years, this influence scheme has been going on, yet neither the Chinese Communist Party nor institutions of higher education have faced repercussions for their actions.

Indeed, during the Trump administration, it discovered \$6.5 billion in previously unreported foreign money to universities from adversarial countries.

For the first time, real progress was being made to hold institutions accountable for undisclosed contributions.

But mysteriously, when the Biden administration came into office, all progress toward discovering these contributions stopped.

The Department of Education is shirking its duty to enforce the law and has abandoned robust scrutiny of undisclosed foreign gifts and contracts that violate section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Mr. Speaker, we have known since 1965 that the potential for damage done to our institutions through foreign contributions was possible.

Section 117 is the single most important enforcement tool at the Biden administration's disposal to protect against the threats posed by our foreign adversaries attempting to steal research and buy off students and faculty on our Nation's campuses.